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MYANMAR MILITARY EXECUTES 4 PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS

Myanmar's government announced on Monday that it had carried out its first executions in nearly 50 years

JUNTA IGNORES GLOBAL CALL FOR CLEMENCY

The executions were carried out despite worldwide pleas for clemency for the four political prisoners, including from United Nations. According to state-run Mirror Daily newspaper, the four were executed for directing and organising "violent and inhuman accomplice acts of terrorist killings". It is not clear when the executions were carried out

CONVICTED OF CARRYING OUT TERROR ACTS

- Among those executed was former lawmaker Phyo Zeya Thaw, 41, who was convicted of offences including terrorism. Also executed was Kyaw Min Yu, a 53-year-old democracy activist
- The other two men, Hla Myo Aung and Aung Thura Zaw, allegedly killed a woman whom they believed was a military informer P12

2,114

ESTIMATED NO. OF CIVILIANS KILLED BY MYANMAR MILITARY SINCE THE 2021 COUP

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

TAKES OATH OF OFFICE AND SECRECY; TOUCHES ALL THE RIGHT BUTTONS IN ACCEPTANCE SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT

Prez Murmu personifies poor's aspirations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

DROUPADI Murmu on Monday took her oath of office and secrecy as the 15th President of India in what was described by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a watershed moment for the country, especially for the poor and the downtrodden.

She is the country's first tribal and the second woman to have been elected to the country's top Constitutional post.

"It is the power of India's democracy that a girl born in a poor tribal home could reach the topmost Constitutional post," she said in her address, marking her journey from Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, one of the most underdeveloped in India, to Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Murmu, who began her speech in Hindi with *Johar*, a traditional tribal greeting, and *Namaskar*, said, "that I attained the post of President is not my personal achievement. It is the achievement of every poor person in India. My election is proof of the fact that the poor in India can have dreams and fulfil them too."

Her address lasted a little over 18 minutes and often referenced her tribal identity. "This is the greatness of India, the mother of democracy," she said to thunderous applause from the gathering that included Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former president Pratibha Patil, MPs as well as leaders such as Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik who backed her election.

The new president, who was born in a Santhal family, said she grew up in a small tribal village where even getting primary education was a dream and went on to become the first person in the village to enroll for college education.

Murmu paid floral tributes at the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi at Raj Ghat in the morning, ahead of her swearing-in ceremony. She was escorted by military and other officials. Chief Justice of India N V Ramana later administered her oath as President at the historic Central Hall of Parliament.

She spoke about India's resolve to make progress through participation and consensus. "In our country full of diversities, we are engaged in the making of *Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat* by adopting many languages, religions, sects, food habits, lifestyles and customs."

Catapulted into the Presidential spotlight, the unassuming Murmu is deeply spiritual and a keen practitioner of the meditation techniques of the Brahma Kumaris, a movement she embraced after she lost her husband, two sons, mother and brother in the just six years between 2009 and 2015. Her daughter Itishree works in a bank. Commending her remarkable journey, there was music and dance in several places, including Ranchi, Chikmagalur and Bhubaneswar P9

FREEZE FRAME: Newly sworn-in President Droupadi Murmu in the hot seat as her predecessor Ram Nath Kovind looks on, in her office at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Monday| PTI

INSPIRED BY SRI AUROBINDO

Recalling that she once worked as a teacher at Sri Aurobindo Integral School in Odisha's Rairangpur, President Murmu said in her address that the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo on education continue to inspire her

SPARRING OVER KHARGE'S SEAT

While the Congress claimed the leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge was made to sit in a seat not commensurate with the position he holds at the oath ceremony, the BJP rebutted it

PUTIN: HOPE TO ENHANCE TIES

"I hope your activities as the head of state will promote further development of the Russian-Indian political dialogue and productive cooperation in different areas," said Russian President Putin in his message

It is a watershed moment for India especially for the poor, marginalised and downtrodden

Narendra Modi, PM

Ready to work with President Murmu to enhance mutual trust and push bilateral ties forward

Xi Jinping, Chinese Prez

Her views were nice. Every word in her speech had a meaning. I am very impressed

Ashok Gehlot, CM

'Not all Swiss bank assets are black money'

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

MEDIA headlines on black money are often misleading as it is incorrect term all assets held in Swiss banks as black money, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha question on Monday. According to Swiss authorities, not all deposits held in their banks are black money.

"More often than not, media reports have not taken account of the way the figures have to be interpreted, which has resulted in misleading headlines and analyses. Moreover, it is frequently assumed that any assets held by Indian residents in Switzerland are undeclared (so-called black money)," the FM said, quoting Swiss authorities, who claim not all assets in their banks are black money.

Recently, there were reports that Indian funds in Switzerland banks have grown by 50% to 3.83 billion Swiss francs or ₹30,626 crore in 2021, recording a 14-year high.

The FM said the government has no official estimates of the assets held by individuals and corporates in Swiss banks. She added that the Centre received ₹14,820 crore as tax demand after completing the assessment in 368 cases till May 31 under the overseas black money law.

JAB-O-METER TAKE YOUR SHOT
July 24 16,82,390 doses
July 25 27,74,343 doses
TOTAL: 2,02,56,98,856

NATION WIDE	JULY 24	JULY 25
Fresh cases	20,279	16,866
Recoveries	18,143	16,148
Deaths	36	48

KARNATAKA	JULY 24	JULY 25
Fresh cases	1,161	939
Recoveries	837	1,204
Deaths	0	1

DUPLANTIS SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS

Swede pole-vault sensation, Armand Duplantis, brought the curtains down on the athletics World Championships with another world record on Sunday night. A look...

Third new world mark this year

After having already assured himself of gold, the Swede took his time. He failed at his world record attempt of **6.21m** but his second was picture perfect. It was the third time that he had set a new mark this year.

Amusan smashes 100mH milestone

Nigeria's Tobi Amusan set the track on fire with two blistering marks. The first of them was a world record in **12.12 seconds**

The second, which won her the final, was quicker (12.06 seconds) than her first but a 2.5m/s tailwind meant it didn't stand for record purposes | P15

ARMAND DUPLANTIS

WESTERN GHATS

Kasturirangan report on ice, committee to hold physical survey

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a major breakthrough, the Central government has considered the objection of the stakeholders of the Western Ghats against implementation of the Dr Kasturirangan report, as a high-powered committee constituted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) will conduct physical landscaping and submit a detailed report in a year's time.

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav assured the delegation led by Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, which held deliberations in New Delhi on Monday, that unless the committee's report is submitted, the draft notification re-issued by the MoEF&CC for Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) cannot be implemented.

"The stakeholder states have got another opportunity to safeguard their interests. Following the terms and references of the committee, a state-level committee will also be set up," Bommai told reporters.

"The Kasturirangan report is unscientific as it is based on a satellite survey, following which the entire greenery, including plantations of farmers, are considered ESAs. We have sought a physical landscape survey," he explained. "Union minister Yadav has also promised to pay a visit, following our request."

The high-power committee will be requested to hear out grievances of the stakeholders, considering each village as a unit. The states also objected to the Madhav Gadgil report, which was followed by the Kasturirangan report, saying that both were unscientific, he said.

The committee chairperson will be former Director General of Forests Sanjay Kumar (retd).

CONTINUED ON P4

CM Basavaraj Bommai presents a book to Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav, in New Delhi on Monday | EXPRESS

The Kasturirangan report is unscientific as it is based on a satellite survey, following which the entire greenery, including plantations of farmers, are considered ESAs

Basavaraj Bommai, Chief Minister

No place to bury dead: State to buy private land

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

AMID growing concern over the issue of lack of land for graveyards in the state, the State Revenue Department has issued an 'emergency' direction to all deputy commissioners (DCs) to buy land from private entities and use them as graveyards. The direction has been issued after the department received applications from villagers across the state seeking land for graveyards in their respective places.

In Karnataka, there are 29,438 villages in more than 6,000 Gram Panchayat limits. In January this year, Revenue Minister R Ashoka held a meeting with Deputy Commissioners and Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and various issues including lack of space for burial grounds in many villages were discussed. During the meeting, it was pointed out that as many as 4,370 villages (close to 20 per cent of the total in Karnataka) do not have burial grounds. The State government authorities had initiated steps to acquire land for the purpose and was expected to finalise it by March-end. Most of the affected villages are in north Karnataka and Malnad regions.

However, land could not be acquired for all villages. Officials from the revenue department said more than 1,000 villages do not have graveyards. To get land, Under Secretary, Revenue Department (Land approval-I) has written a letter to all the DCs following directions from Principal Secretary (Revenue Department) asking them to acquire land from private parties in the villages that do not have government land.

A senior official from the department told *TNIE* that for public works, DCs are authorised to buy land by paying three times the guidance value. "We have told officials to identify and buy land according to the population. We have been receiving letters from the villages concerned," the official said. P4

THIRD CASE

Youth with terror links held in B'luru

M G CHETAN @ Bengaluru

THE Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have arrested a food delivery partner in Bengaluru on charges of planning to join a global terrorist organisation. The accused is Akhtar Hussain Lashkar from Assam, aged around 25 years. Police arrested Lashkar from his residence in Tilak Nagar in South-East Bengaluru in a joint operation with Central intelligence agencies.

Sources in the police department said Lashkar was under the scanner of the Central intelligence agencies since several months. "His posts on social media supporting terrorist organisations and their acts of terrorism brought him under the surveillance of the agencies. He was also chatting with people linked to a global terrorist organisation using mobile phone apps. The messages exchanged between them suggest that he was highly radicalised and had decided to join their organisation," a senior police officer said.

Acting on a tip-off from Central agencies, CCB police kept a close watch on Lashkar's movements. "In a coordinated operation, Lashkar was picked up from his house on Sunday evening. He was with four others, who are from Assam and are food delivery executives," the officer said. P5

Drone lab to come up on IIIT-Dharwad campus

ARUNKUMAR HURALIMATH @ Hubballi

PLANS are afoot to set up a state-of-the-art drone laboratory at the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Dharwad campus, for studies on developing unmanned aerial vehicle technology. The use of drones is increasingly being adopted and used in various sectors. Drones are also used for taking photographs and capturing videos while dousing fire in multi-storied buildings.

Some farmers in Dharwad district have been using drones to spray pesticides on their crops for the past three years. Pocket drones are also being used.

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) has allotted funds to the institute which is being used to set up the lab at the IIIT campus.

According to a senior professor of IIIT, Dharwad, the lab will help in studying drone technology and taking it to the next level. Drone technology can be used for agricultural work and crop, water body monitoring, delivering goods at the doorsteps, besides other applications. Study and research work will be carried out at the drone lab to make the technology more user-friendly and to develop it at a low cost.

"Drones can fly in any direction. There is a need to develop drones that can fly in narrow and lower areas. Once the lab is set up, its technology will be developed with the application of artificial intelligence (AI). Being a developing country, India needs such technology to boost its speed in development", he added.

Director of IIIT Dharwad, Prof Kavi Mahesh said that under corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, KPTCL has given ₹25 lakh which will be used to set up the lab. "This will help the students to study and develop drone crafts," he said.

EXPRESS READ

Govt appoints new faces to boards, corporations

Bengaluru: Three days ahead of CM Basavaraj Bommai completing one year in office and a mega-rally planned to mark the occasion in Doddaballapur on Thursday, the government on Monday appointed chairpersons to 22 boards and corporations. The appointees are a mix of party loyalists, RSS members and supporters of ex-CM BSY | P4

CET results on July 30, says minister Ashwath

Bengaluru: Higher Education Minister Dr CN Ashwath Narayan said the Karnataka Examination Authority will announce the Common Entrance Test results on July 30. He said students of other boards must upload their Class 12 marks on KEA website by July 26 evening | P2

State's 1st tiger census to be out in a fortnight

Bengaluru: As the country awaits the all-India tiger estimates, Karnataka Forest Department is working overtime to release the first internal assessment tiger census in a fortnight. Initial reports show Karnataka is home to 600 tigers, with the largest population in the Nilgiri biosphere | P5

Uproar as Birla suspends 4 'unruly' Congress MPs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

CONGRESS MPs Manickam Tagore, Jothimani, T N Prathapan and Ramya Haridas were on Monday suspended for the rest of the monsoon session after they ignored the Lok Sabha Speaker's warning not to disrupt proceedings by displaying placards inside the House.

A furious Congress termed the action a 'blot on democracy'. Opposition parties were demanding a discussion on the issue of price rise.

The proceedings in both Houses started at 2 pm, after the Presidential oath-taking ceremony. Several MPs gave notices for suspension of business to take up discussion on inflation. The action against the four Congress MPs came after Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla said he was willing to allow discussion after 3 pm but wouldn't tolerate any placard protest in the House. "If you want to show placards, do it outside. I am ready for discussions, but don't think my kindheartedness is a weakness," he said, adjourning proceedings.

When the session resumed, the MPs returned with the placards. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi then requested the Speaker to take action against MPs so that the proceedings can run smoothly. After suspension, the MPs went near Mahatma Gandhi's statue and raised slogans.